

Title

Raising Readers: Preparing Preschoolers for Success

Target Audience

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service teachers, day-care providers, and care providers of preschool children to address research and strategies they can use to facilitate the early literacy development of preschool children.

Prerequisites

To successfully participate and complete the activities in this course, the learner must:

- Have some experience with preschool children.
- Have an interest in language, early literacy, and reading instruction.

Course Description

In this course, learners learn how to raise readers and prepare preschoolers for success by developing their early literacy skills. The theories and strategies presented in the course are based on the latest early literacy research from Susan B. Neuman and Kathleen Roskos (2007). Learners will learn how they can use this research to plan meaningful literacy-learning experiences for young children. These early literacy activities build on preschoolers' prior knowledge, expand their vocabulary, and develop their oral language development - providing them with the foundation for reading and writing and future academic success. The course provides learners with video examples, online interactives, and activities from PBS and engages them in a collaborative learning experience.

Instructor/Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet.

Credits

To be determined by college or university.

Goals

The overall goal of this course is for learners to develop an understanding of key concepts about early literacy and to learn an array of practical strategies for developing children's early literacy skills. By the end of the course, learners will:

1. Know the five essential early literacy practices.
2. Understand the importance of a strong foundation of oral language in children's literacy development.
3. Know the characteristics of a supportive literacy-learning environment and understand how to implement those characteristics in their preschool environment.
4. Recognize the learning characteristics of English language learners.
5. Understand the value technology can bring to literacy activities and know how to implement technology in their literacy activities.

6. Know about the wealth of resources to be found via public broadcasting that can support their literacy activities.

Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

Local stations can complete this section.

Outline of Content and Activities

Learners begin the course by exploring the online learning environment and get ready for learning by making a plan for learning online. When learners are comfortable with how to navigate through the online course environment and are aware of the course expectations, they proceed to the Course Content area to complete the six sessions of the course, working through each session in order. The course clearly guides learners through each step of the content to maximize the online learning experience and provide learners with a meaningful literacy-learning opportunity.

Throughout the sessions, learners are also asked to articulate their ideas in various forms; for example, they are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and experiences and to note interesting ideas and theories from the readings in a journal (this is recommended, but not required.) They are also required to collaborate and discuss with their fellow learners in the Discussion area each week. Learners are given an opportunity to practice the concepts and theories from each session with “Ideas into Action” activities. These activities ask learners to think about how they will implement some of the research-based theories with the children they teach. In each session there is a Family Connection with PBS and Reaching Out to Everyone tip box with additional resources designed to help learners inform and involve parents and families and meet the different learning needs of children.

This course is designed to address the *New Standards* from the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). This course specifically addresses the following standards from *Speaking and Listening for Preschool through Third Grade*:

Standard 1: Habits –

- Talking a Lot,
- Conversing at Length on a Topic, and;
- Discussing Books.

Standard 3: Language Use and Conventions –

- Word Play, Phonological Awareness and Language Awareness, and;
- Vocabulary and Word Choice.

This course is also designed to address the *Standards for the English Language Arts* from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and International Reading Association (IRA) that were developed to serve as a guide for teachers in developing curriculum and instruction that foster students’ literacy development. The course specifically addresses Standards 1, 3, 9, 10, and 12.

Additionally, by participating in this course, teachers are meeting some of the *National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers* (NETS*T) from the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE). Learners will be addressing the following NETS: I (A, B); II (B); V (A, B, D).

Session 1: Playing and Learning Together

Objectives

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Check their confidence level of the main ideas presented in the course.
- Discuss how they might use language development milestones to plan opportunities for children to develop their oral language skills.
- Choose statements that show what they understand about creating a literacy rich learning space for preschool children.

Read

- “The Foundation of Reading and Writing—Language!” from *Nurturing Knowledge*
- “The Five Essential Early Literacy Practices” from *Nurturing Knowledge*
- “Language Development from Age 2 to 3” from PBS Parents
- “Language Development from Age 3 to 4” from PBS Parents
- “Learning and Teaching in Preschool” from PBS Teachers
- “Essential Literacy Materials for the Preschool Literacy Environment” from *Nurturing Knowledge*

Participate in Online Discussions

- Introductory post on the Virtual Café to introduce themselves to fellow learners
- Answer the following: How might you use the language development milestones from PBS Parents to help you be, “intentional in helping the children in our classrooms to develop their listening, comprehending, and speaking skills to prepare them for school and for life?” -- Neuman, S. B. & Roskos, K. (2007)

Explore Interactives

- “How to get around the course”
- “Setting up your space”

Watch Video

- “Ready to Learn” featuring Susan B. Neuman

Complete Activities

- Pre-Course Evaluation Survey
- Click through different areas of the course until confident with navigation
- Make a plan for how they will make time to complete the course
- Create a journal for optional course reflections
- Complete the “Confidence Rating” self-check
- Complete the Ideas into Action activity: Think about how literacy will be a part of your classroom or teaching area. Choose 5-10 statements, from a given list, that show what you now believe and understand about creating a literacy rich learning space for preschool children. Write 2-3 sentences to explain why you chose these particular statements.

Gather Your Thoughts Reflection (not required)

- Take a moment to think about why you are taking this course. Write down one statement about what you would like to learn in this course.
- Respond to the following: Take a moment to think about everything you have learned so far in this session. Reflect in your journal on how children play together in the different learning areas of your classroom or teaching area and how this increases their curiosity and desire to learn. Brainstorm one or two ideas about how you can use children’s curiosity to encourage them to read and write.

Reaching Out to Everyone Additional Resource (not required)

- “Adaptations for Children with Special Needs” from *Nurturing Knowledge*

Family Connection with PBS Additional Resource (not required)

- “3-4 Years: Weaving Worlds with Words” from PBS Parents

Tell me More! Additional Resources (not required)

- “Young Children's Oral Language Development” from Reading Rockets

Session 2: Let's Talk About It

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Talk about their ideas for building on a conversation to develop children's language and knowledge about the world.
- Talk about their ideas for “giving language” in their conversations with children.
- Use a literacy-learning checklist to decide how they will create or change the book area, writing center, and dramatic-play area.

Read

- “Recommended Preschool Activities: Language and Vocabulary Development” from *Between the Lions*
- “How Do I Create Knowledge-Building Language Experiences?” from *Nurturing Knowledge*
- “Mood” from *Nurturing Knowledge*

Participate in Online Discussions

- Respond to the following: Think about one conversation you have had with a child. You may wish to use your notes from your journal to help you remember the details of the conversation. Write a brief description (1-2 sentences) about the conversation. Discuss with your classmates how you may have been able to build on the conversation by questioning, listening, responding, and/or keeping the conversation going to develop the child's language and build his or her background knowledge about the world.
- Return to the Discussion area and continue the conversation by discussing together your ideas for “giving language” to children.

Watch Video

- “Adults and Children Talking Together” featuring Susan B. Neuman

Complete Activities

- Talk Strategies
- Book area, writing center, and dramatic-play area checklist
- Complete the Ideas into Action activity: Use your completed checklist to decide how you will create or change your book area, writing center, and dramatic-play area. Your ideas will need to take into account any space and budget limits that you have.

Gather Your Thoughts Reflection (not required)

- Respond to the following: Think about what you have learned from video and readings in this section. Spend one day noting in your journal some of your conversations with children from throughout the day. You only need to write 3-4 brief sentences about each conversation. Think about if there were any changes in the conversations as the location changed.

Reaching Out to Everyone Additional Resource (not required)

- “Reading Risk Indicators by Grade Level” by Reading Rockets

Family Connection with PBS Additional Resource (not required)

- “Talking Milestones” from PBS Parents

Tell me More! Additional Resources (not required)

- “Approaches to Learning from Age 2 to 3” from PBS Parents
- “Approaches to Learning from Age 3 to 4” from PBS Parents
- “Early Literacy: Policy and Practice in the Preschool Years” from Reading Rockets
- “Early Literacy Instruction: Research Applications in the Classroom” from Reading Rockets

Session 3: Playing with Words

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Discuss ideas for rhyming activities for an online story.
- Reflect on the language strategies modeled by a teacher.
- Think about their ideas for using language strategies with children.

Read

- “What the Research Says” from *Nurturing Knowledge*
- “Recommended Preschool Activities: Phonological Awareness” from *Between the Lions*
- “What Parakeets Need” online story from *Between the Lions*

Participate in Online Discussion

- Respond to the following: Imagine you are going to read the “What Parakeets Need” story with a group of children. Discuss your ideas for rhyming questions that you could ask children and some activities you could do before, during, and after reading the story. You should use the readings and Web sites from this session to help you.

Watch Videos

- “Language Strategies” featuring Susan B. Neuman
- “Rhyme Time” from *Sesame Street*

Complete Activities

- Explore online games and activities from PBS that develop rhyming skills.
- Complete the Ideas into Action activity: Think about the teacher you watched in the “Strategies in Action” video and look at any notes you may have made in your journal. How was the teacher able to “give language” and use talk strategies? Reflect on how the students responded to the teacher and your ideas for using language strategies with children.

Gather Your Thoughts Reflections (not required)

- Respond to the following: Reflect on the “Language Strategies” video and how the teacher uses talk strategies.
- Respond to the following: Choose one song or poem that you enjoy using with children. Sing the song or say the poem with the children and note their reactions and responses to the rhythm of the language and word play. You may wish to tape-record or video the activity to help you record the experience. Take notes about which children seemed to notice the rhyming words and how the children reacted to the song or poem

Reaching Out to Everyone Additional Resource (not required)

- “Understanding and Recognizing: Attention Disabilities” from PBS Parents

Family Connection with PBS Additional Resource (not required)

- “ABC’s of Phonemic Awareness” from Reading Rockets

Tell me More! Additional Resource (not required)

- “Phonemic Awareness” from Reading Rockets: Launching Readers

Session 4: Time for a Story

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Identify chances to involve children with print during a read-aloud session.
- Make a plan for how songs and books will be a part of the daily classroom routine.

Read

- “Reading Milestones” from PBS Parents (not required)
- “General Tips for Successful Read-Alouds” from *Nurturing Knowledge*
- “Recommended Preschool Activities: Book and Print Awareness” from Between the Lions

Participate in Online Discussion

- Respond to the following: Share examples of when you have created “magic” during a read-aloud session with young children.

Explore Interactive

- “Successful Read-Aloud”

Watch Videos

- “We Choose to Cha Cha Cha” from Between the Lions
- “Using Multimedia” featuring Susan B. Neuman

Complete Activity

- Complete the Ideas into Action activity: Write your ideas for how you will incorporate songs and books into your daily routine with children.

Gather Your Thoughts Reflection (not required)

- Respond to the following: Choose one recommendation from “Recommended Preschool Activities: Book and Print Awareness” to try out with the children you teach. Record the children’s reactions in your journal. Think about what went well with the activity and what you might change for the future.

Reaching Out to Everyone Additional Resource (not required)

- “Unheard Voices and the Right to Communicate: Augmentative Communication” from PBS Parents

Family Connection with PBS Additional Resources (not required)

- “How to Get the Most from Any Story While you Read to Your Kids” from Between the Lions
- “How to Get the Most from Any Story After you’ve Read to Your Kids” from Between the Lions

Tell me More! Additional Resources (not required)

- “Taking Delight in Words: Using Oral Language To Build Young Children's Vocabularies” from Reading Rockets
- “Five Really Great Rhyming Books” from *Nurturing Knowledge*
- “Hints on How to Read Aloud to a Group” from Reading Rockets
- Between the Lions: Stories
- Between the Lions: Videos

Session 5: Using the Computer

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Discuss how computer activities may improve a literacy activity for children.
- Complete a Web search to find early literacy resources that inspire children to learn and develop their language skills.
- Explain how they will use a computer game or activity with children.

Read

- “Learning With Media” from Sesame Workshop

Participate in Online Discussions

- Respond to the following: Talk about your ideas for using the computer to help teach reading and writing and think about how the children you teach would respond to working on the computer.
- Share 6-8 resources found during Web search.

Complete Activities

- Explore online stories from PBS
- Do a Web search for online games and activities that interest children and develop language.
- Complete the Ideas into Action activity: Choose one computer game or activity from your Web search or from one of your classmate’s Web search. Think about how you will use this game with one child or a group of children.

Reaching Out to Everyone Additional Resource (not required)

- “How Technology Can Help Your Child Be More Active” from PBS Parents

Family Connection with PBS Additional Resources (not required)

- “Computers: Preschoolers” from PBS Parents
- “Mouse Tips for Working with Young Children” from PBS Kids

Tell me More! Additional Resources (not required)

- Media Infusion from PBS Teachers
- Technology Integration: Research and Best Practices from PBS Teachers
- “Technology and the Building Blocks for Teaching Students to Read” from NEIRTEC

Session 6: Every Child a Reader

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Discuss the learning needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) and the best practices to meet their learning needs.
- Use the learning needs of English Language Learners and the elements of a supportive learning environment to choose strategies that will include all children in literacy-learning opportunities.
- Check their confidence level of the ideas presented in this course.

Read

- “Let’s Talk About It: Fostering the Development of Language Skills and Emergent Literacy” from PBS
- “Reading in Kindergarten” from ¡Colorín Colorado!

Participate in Online Discussions

- Respond to the following: Discuss the reading, “Reading in Kindergarten” and how you could use these activities with English speaking children as well as ELLs. Do you think ELLs need to work on different activities or just have more opportunities to practice their language skills?
- Finish any ongoing conversations and say goodbye to classmates.

Watch Video

- “Supporting English Language Learners” featuring Susan B. Neuman

Complete Activities

- Complete the Ideas into Action activity: Describe the children you teach and choose 5-8 statements, from a given list, that reflect your ideas for how you will develop all children’s language skills and eagerness to learn. Write about how you plan to put the statements into action.
- Retake the “Confidence Rating” self-check
- Post-Course Evaluation Survey

Gather Your Thoughts Reflection (not required)

- Respond to the following: Go back to the statement you wrote in Session 1 about what you would like to learn in this course. Now that you have finished the course, think about what you have learned and achieved. Write one statement about what else you would like to learn about early literacy and how you will find that information.

Family Connection with PBS Additional Resources (not required)

- ¡Colorín Colorado! Web site
- “Raising Readers” from the U.S. Department of Education

Tell me More! Additional Resources (not required)

- For Early Care Providers from PBS
- English Language Learners from Reading Rockets
- Reading 101: What You Should Know About from Reading Rockets

Schedule

This course is scheduled to take approximately 15 hours to complete the readings, discussions, and activities and to explore videos and resources.

Requirements

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all activities
- Participate regularly in the course discussions

Materials

Technical Requirements

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail
- TeacherLine required plug-ins

Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by institution

Evaluation

This course is evaluated on a letter grade basis, and may be available for graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.

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